

available statistics such as tax lists, birth and death records into a social fabric that is rich and enjoyable to read.

Several of Roxana's children certainly led interesting lives. Clarissa (Clara) Walbridge Rogers, for example, was a school teacher in Peacham, but went west, unmarried, lived in San Francisco, and survived the famed 1906 earthquake. Julian Walbridge Rix, the artist, is recognized today as one of the finest late nineteenth-century landscape artists. For Civil War buffs, Dustan Walbridge, the carriage maker turned soldier, recounts life as an enlisted man until he was mortally wounded at Cold Harbor in 1864. And last, but certainly not least, Lyman Watts, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Middlebury and Congregational minister, struggled with the increasing worldliness of his flock in the midst of spiritual depravity.

*Roxana's Children* is truly a multi-disciplinary work. It would be extremely useful for a variety of classroom topics such as life in America's early factories, particularly from a woman's point of view, the influence, or lack thereof, of religion in nineteenth-century America, the growth of the nation through the eyes of an artist, and the living and dying inevitable in war. It would be appropriate as a supplemental text in a number of college courses, but I can also envision it being assigned reading for those high school teachers who demand and expect the best from their students who are studying nineteenth-century America. Sadly, Peacham today is more of a tourists' curiosity off the beaten path, with a Bed and Breakfast. What may be even more sad is that no descendants of Roxana Watts live there. Yet her family does indeed live on in this splendid work.

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**Ronald G. Walters. *American Reformers, 1815-1860*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1997. Revised edition. Pp. xix, 249. Paper, \$12.00; ISBN 0-8090-1588-9.**

After an absence of nearly two decades, *American Reformers* has reappeared in a gently upgraded and refined format. Although the book purports to cover the time span 1815 to 1860, its major emphasis is roughly 1820 to 1850. Fortunately, the temptation of undertaking sociological and biographical analysis of key individuals who figured in the numerous reform movements is largely avoided. Instead, the primary focus is on the ideas, concepts, and practices embodied within the vast array of episodes and activities that were directed toward change in antebellum America.

Professor Walters draws sharp distinctions when labeling leaders or organizations as either radical or reformist. A radical, he contends, was one who wished "to change the structure of society," while a reformer was a person who desired to "improve" or refine the existing system or scheme of things. With uneven degrees of success, a wide vista of subjects is addressed, from significant forces (antislavery, religious crusades, and prohibition) to a host of lesser fads, causes, and pursuits. To say the least, many of the latter are often fascinating and unique oddities that include developments such as

spiritualism, phrenology, feminism, education reform, physical and mental health, pacifism, and the mistreatment of the poor and working classes. Although one perhaps can debate the influence and impact that these efforts had during their heyday, and thereby quibble over the space allotted to each topic, the book is a nicely done overview that corresponds to its major mission.

There are deficiencies in these pages, however. For one, there is a certain amount of redundancy, and chapter five is a tad awkward in that it starts out dealing with female issues and then gradually drifts into antiwar themes. Further, the material is not documented, and a bibliographical essay does not compensate fully for this omission.

Two services are, nevertheless, performed by this volume. First, the European connections with the activities transpiring in the United States are frequently brought to light, thus tending to illustrate how unoriginal Americans sometimes were. Second, the reformers and their respective enterprises are placed within the context of their times and shown as "responding to change in a manner their society and culture allowed." For there were monumental transformations in American life during the antebellum years--urbanization and a host of technological, economic, political, and demographic changes that needed to be adjusted.

Portions of *American Reformers* could serve well to enhance stimulation in survey courses, which unfortunately yet understandably, tend to be suffocatingly dominated by military and political affairs. Such a tactic might provide some refreshing relief for the student.

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